

AMBASSADOR SICHAN SIV
Statement on the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations
San Francisco, June 3, 2005

(AS DELIVERED)

Thank you very much for that kind introduction. I am delighted to be in San Francisco where I left my heart (*laughter*). Whenever I am in California, I think to myself, “*I’ll be back*” (*laughter*). I am honored to join you in this important celebration.

President Franklin Roosevelt was the first to coin the term "United Nations" to describe the continued fight against the Axis Powers. Following World War II, the allies adopted the term to define a worldwide body of nations. On June 26, 1945, fifty countries signed the U.N. Charter right here in San Francisco. This sixtieth anniversary is a good time to reflect on its accomplishments and to look at the challenges ahead.

Three principles guide the United States at the United Nations. First, we want the U.N. to live up to the vision of its founders. When it is working effectively against terrorism, protecting refugees, providing humanitarian aid, or agreeing on ways to eradicate poverty, it is advancing peace and prosperity. There are many examples: the U.N. assisted Afghanistan in making history when its people voted in a democratic election last year, and Iraq in January. In Sudan, Liberia, Haiti, and other nations, the U.N. has been working to bring security, stability, and humanitarian assistance to people in need. From Africa to the Caribbean to Asia, it is helping to turn societies away from old conflicts, overcome persistent poverty, and fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

The second principle is that multilateral engagement must be effective. Americans want to make sure the U.N. is doing a good job of preserving international peace, advancing freedom and human rights, improving health, nutrition, and education for those in desperate need. When it does it, we will continue to be supportive. When it falls short, we will say so.

The U.S. government will continue to defend our nation and promote its values independently; and we will not hesitate to work with the Security Council when collective action is useful or justified to meet threats to international peace and security.

And finally, America wants good stewardship of U.N. resources. As we strive to make U.N. work more effective, we must not neglect scrutiny of its management and finances. We will continue to promote meaningful reforms that will make the U.N. more efficient. We continue to pay the largest portion of its budget. We owe it to our taxpayers to make sure that the U.N. is using the money wisely.

We have long been a proponent of U.N. reform. We are very much engaged in the consultations taking place in the run-up to the High Level Event that commemorates the Fifth Anniversary of the Millennium Summit. Secretary General Kofi Annan has made an important contribution to this effort with a series of proposals entitled “In Larger Freedom” which members are studying and discussing now.

We welcome its positive emphasis on the importance of promoting freedom and respect for human rights, advancing democracy, and strengthening the rule of law. We appreciate its support for the creation of a U.N. Democracy Fund, as proposed by President Bush last September. We also welcome the report's proposal to create a Peacebuilding Commission to improve the U.N.'s post-conflict peacebuilding responsibilities. This merits serious and careful consideration.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendation to replace the Commission on Human Rights with a smaller, more effective Human Rights Council. We also agree with him on the need for a more effective international response to the threats posed by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. We particularly welcome the call for states to accede to the twelve existing counter-terrorism conventions and its endorsement of the Proliferation Security Initiative.

We believe that changes to U.N. structure and management--including budget, personnel and oversight reforms--are needed to make it more transparent and accountable. To accomplish this, we strongly support strengthening the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

On the question of Security Council reform, we are considering all proposals. We believe any recommendation should be evaluated in terms of improving the effectiveness of the Council.

Last year, President Bush issued a statement on the occasion of U.N. day, in which he recognized the many contributions the U.N. has made in advancing peace and human rights around the world. He reaffirmed U.S. commitment to the high ideals of the U.N. as stated in its charter: *"To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war . . . to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights . . . and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."*

As nations become more representative of their people, as oppressive regimes fall and governments come to govern justly and invest in their people, we will see them bring new vision, values, and principles to the U.N. that are more in line with the Charter.

This was the original vision of the U.N.'s founding fathers. They understood that multilateralism would be most effective when exercised by responsible, free and democratic nations. That is how the United Nations can maintain its credibility and legitimacy. It is also the best way for the United Nations and the United States to become true partners in ensuring peace, development and human rights.

Thank you. *(Applause.)*

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